SOME NEW BOOKS.

The Party System in the United States.

The latest contribution to "The Citizen's Library of Economics, Politics and Sociology," now in course of publication by the Macmillans, is a volume entitled *Political Parties in the United States* by JESSE MACY, professor of political science in Iowa College. As the author points out in a preface, this book is a study of the American party system. There are some references to the party systems in other countries, but these are made merely for the purpose of indicating the relation of political parties to despotic governments, and of demonstrating that in every country where democracy is sufficiently advanced to give rise to political parties the form of party organization is determined by its political institutions. What is peculiar in the American system is derived from peculiar American institutions. The old Federalist party died because it was un-American in the form of its organization. Under the party names of Whig and Democrat the system reached a high degree of perfection, but there was a maladjustment between the party machinery and public opinion; consequently the party went to pieces, and the Civil War was the result. As this volume treats especially of the collapse of the great Whig party, it deals principally with the period from 1846 to 1861. It contains, however, a chapter on the origin of the American party system at which we shall glance before we examine the author's exposition of the causes and consequences of the disintegration of the Whig party.

I.

Dr. Macy points out in his second chapter that the most spectacular part of our party organization has grown out of the obligation to choose once in four years a President and a Vice-President of the United States. The framers of the Federal Constitution adopted a plan for the accomplishment of this work, which, as experience has proved, was irrational and impracticable. Washington was made President by common consent; in his case the action of the Electoral Colleges was merely formal. At the third Presidential election, however, sharp differences of opinion were disclosed, and the necessity for some sort of mechanism not contemplated by the Constitution was made manifest. At the fourth election in 1800 machinery had been devised to supplement the Constitution in the choosing of President and Vice-President. The Congressional caucus, composed of groups of members in the two Houses representing the opposed political opinions of the day, had appeared. These caucuses nominated candidates for President and Vice-President. The members thereof persuaded their political friends in each State to choose Presidential electors pledged to vote for the candidates nominated by the caucus. So thoroughly was this plan carried out that the Republican caucus candidates, Jefferson and Burr, each received all the votes of the electors chosen by the party. But, while each had a large majority of all the electors, neither was chosen President, and the choice fell to the House of Representatives. Thus the method of action adopted by the Constitution had broken down at the first real trial. The Constitution made it impossible for the people to choose a President. An amendment was adopted to remedy this defect. Under the amended Constitution Congressional caucuses continued to make nominations until 1824.

The author of this book recognizes that the Congressional caucus performed after its fashion a work which had to be done in one way or another. Unless some previous understanding had been reached, the Presidential electors who met in their several States to elect a President would usually fail to accomplish their task. It would be a mere accident if any one candidate received a majority of the votes. The election would hence, according to the Constitution, devolve habitually upon the House of Representatives. It was not, however, the intention of the framers of the Constitution that the Executive should be chosen by the Legislature, neither was it their intention that the Chief Magistrate should be chosen by popular vote. Yet, out of the plan adopted, one or the other of these results was inevitable. By means of the organization of political parties and party nominating machinery the choice of the President is now practically determined by popular election. Had the people been content to leave the selection of candidates for the Presidency in the hands of the Congressional caucus, the ultimate outcome would have been widely different from the existing state of things. The condition of mind implied by satisfaction with the Congressional nomination would naturally have prompted the avoiding a popular election for the choosing of Presidential electors. The final result would have been that while candidates were nominated by members of the National Legislature, the Presidential electors would be chosen by the Legislatures of the various States. This frustration of the intention of the framers of the Constitution would have threatened the independence of the Executive. There was from the beginning decided opposition to the Congressional caucus. In the year 1800, when both of the parties made their nominations in this way, the act was done in secret, and the press branded it as conspiracy. So well was the secret kept that, in the case of one of the parties, there was a doubt as to the fact until confession was made twenty-four years later. At the next election the proceedings were more open, but there was still widespread dislike of the method. In 1808, when the chairman of the Republican nominating caucus for 1804 assumed the function of issuing a call for a like caucus, he incurred severe criticism from his own party. His act showed that the caucus was becoming an established institution. The decaying Federalist party tried to fasten odium upon the Republican party by seeking to create the impression that the caucus was a peculiar and characteristic feature of the latter organization. In 1812 dissaffected Republicans who were opposed to the war with England united with Federalists in the support of De Witt Clinton as against Madison. In the interests of Clinton's candidacy, a conference of Federalist leaders of eleven States was held in the city of New York. The conference was not a nominating convention, though it may be perhaps regarded as the germ of one. Clinton had been already placed in nomination by a caucus in the New York Legislature. The aim of the conference was to secure the more cordial support of Federalists who had made no nomination. Before the Congressional caucus was held in 1816, a general understanding had been reached that Monroe should be the candidate of the Republican party. When a call for a caucus was issued, the friends of Monroe viewed the act as opposed to his interests, and some of his supporters absented themselves from the meeting. Monroe, however, received the caucus nomination over Crawford. He was reëlected four years later without a caucus nomination, and the last nominating caucus, that of 1824, put forward the name of William H. Crawford.

During the period of confusion in party organisation which followed the disbandment of the Federalist party there was no uniform system of Presidential nomination. In some instances nominations were made by joint resolution of the two Houses of a State Legislature; in other cases nominations would be made by local conventions, public meetings, newspapers or even individuals. These acts were obviously each and all informal and inconclusive. With the new alignment of parties, which began during the Administration of John Quincy Adams, a new method of nomination made its appearance. In the year 1831, the Anti-Masons held a national convention for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice-President. During the following year such conventions were held by the National Republicans and by the Democrats. Both of these party organizations had grown out of the party of Jefferson. He himself was both a Democrat and a Republican. From the beginning of party organization he was stigmatized by his enemies as a Democrat. He called himself a Republican, or a Democratic-Republican. As the term Democrat became a mark of honor rather than of reproach, it gradually superseded the earlier term. When Jefferson died in 1826 that branch of his party which was crystallizing around the leadership of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren was commonly known as the Democratic. The Whigs, who had first called themselves National Republicans, always maintained that the Democracy was not the true Jeffersonian party. It was in their eyes a new and dangerous organization which had filched the name of the party called into being by Jefferson. The Whigs themselves gloried in their alleged political descent from the third President. The first national Whig convention in 1839 assumed the official title of "Democratic-Whig Convention." Within twenty years the great body of the Northern Whigs found themselves in full possession of the good old Jeffersonian name Republican.

II.

In a chapter on "The Great Whig Failure," Dr. Macy pronounces it an undeniable truth that the Civil War was the result of a series of political crimes and blunders. He holds that to teach that the disruption of the Union and the horrible tragedy of the Civil War are events that could not be prevented is as immoral as to teach that every normal young man must inevitably lead for a time an immoral life. It is the author's belief that had President Taylor lived the compromise measures of 1850 would have been defeated. California would still probably have been admitted as a free State, Texas would have been confined within narrower limits, the Union would not have been divided, and the Union would have drawn to itself the support of all classes who were in favor of restricting slavery within the limits then imposed upon it. When President Taylor died in July, 1850, party government in the United States was in a more nearly normal condition than it had ever been before or has ever been since. The two great national organizations had been fifty years in building. They were genuine American institutions, and they were the only truly national American institutions which had by their very nature a great binding force. While the slavery question had already disrupted the most influential of the churches, the great national parties had as yet remained intact. Throughout the anti-slavery agitation they had thus far grown stronger and more efficient. Within the two parties were included nearly the whole of the American people. The abolitionists were few. Many of the Free-Soilers had returned to the Democratic party, and the remainder stood ready to be absorbed into the Whig party as soon as the obvious tendency therein toward a limitation of the institution of slavery should become sufficiently decisive. The two parties commanded the moral support of the whole people as no two parties have since commanded it. The spoils system had not yet wrought its most serious injury to party organization. The parties were great national associations, were adapted to discovering the national opinion and embodying it in national conduct. The largest voting strength of the Whig party was in the North, yet it was strong and influential in the South as well. There were influential Whig families in the South who were proud of the name, and whose descendants are to this day proud of their Whig ancestors.

It is further to be borne in mind that the strength of the national sentiment opposed to the extension of slavery was concentrated in the Whig party which was in a position to give effective expression to that sentiment. On that ground the party as a party opposed the annexation of Texas. With Henry Clay as leader the campaign of 1844 was conducted with restriction of the peculiar institution as the chief issue. Cassius M. Clay, a Kentucky abolitionist, urged Northern abolitionists to vote the Whig ticket as the surest way to advance the cause of opposition to slavery. Four years later the extreme pro slavery section of the Democratic party in the South sought to form a coalition party on sectional issues, but the Whigs resisted the pressure and gave in every Southern State a large vote for the national party. Dr. Macy has no doubt that, as it became more and more evident that the Whig party was to become the national organ for resisting the extension of slavery into the newly acquired territory, some extreme pro-slavery Whigs might have been induced to transfer their allegiance to the Democratic party, but he holds that a corresponding number of Union and anti-slavery Democrats would have drifted toward the Whig party. To this latter class belonged Thomas H. Benton of Missouri a lifelong and consistent Democrat, but strongly inclined to break with his party when its pro-slavery attitude became pronounced. Had the Whig party held its ground in respect to the extension of slavery, no party of political importance would have been formed on sectional lines. Had no party been formed on sectional lines, there is, in our author's opinion, good reason to believe that there would have been no disruption of the Union and no Civil War, and the institution of slavery would have been placed in a position where the speedy and peaceful elimination of it could have been counted on.

The so-called Compromise of 1850 proved the beginning of the end of the Whig party and furnished the causes of its tragical collapse. Our author thinks that the men who were responsible for this act should have been wiser. Daniel Webster fourteen years earlier had warned the Southern slave holders that the abolitionists of the North were actuated by sincere religious motives which must be respected. Anti-slavery sentiment had in the meantime grown no weaker. It had not become less religious nor less worthy of respect. Consequently Dr. Macy deems it an unaccountable lack of political sagacity which permitted Daniel Webster and Henry Clay to give their support to a more stringent fugitive slave law. They well knew the state of Northern sentiment on that question, and Henry Clay understood that a slave trader or a slave hunter was even in the South a despised and reprobated man who was not admitted into good society. He knew also that the people of the North were as proud in their way as the people of the South, and that the people of the North were just then not in a state of mind to enter heartily into a copartnership which the Southern people themselves despised. They had no more respect for a slave trader or a man stealer than had the Southerners. Moreover, Webster knew, or ought to have known, that a very large proportion of the Northern people had reached the religious conviction that it was a heinous sin not to assist a brother man in his efforts to escape from thraldom. Tales are told in connection with the history of the famous Underground Railway which show that the natural human sympathy underlying the conviction just named was not confined to avowed abolitionists. The men indeed were very few, North or South, that really enjoyed putting a bloodhound on the track of a negro mother who was seeking to carry her child to a land of liberty. The Southern planter who might avail himself of the services of a slave catcher would not allow his children to associate with the children of a man who would follow such a business.

In advocating the compromise measures of 1850, Henry Clay counted upon his fingers five wounds which, as he said, would be left unhealed by President Taylor's demand that California should be admitted into the Union as a free State without any equivalent concession to the South. Among the five wounds which, as Clay thought, his own compromise bill would heal, was the South's demand for a more stringent fugitive slave law. There was already a law providing for the recovery of fugitives, but the people of the North would not obey it because they believed that it commanded an immoral act. There was, Dr. Macy thinks, no reason to assume that a new law on the subject would be treated with greater respect. There was, moreover, at the time, no especially aggravating grievance. The negroes were not escaping in large numbers. So far, therefore, as the fugitive slave question was concerned, the thing for the Whigs to do was to do nothing. So also, with regard to the disposition of the newly acquired territories, it was the true policy of the Whig party to sit still. Already California was practically a free State. It could not be made a slave State. If the Whig party had done nothing about New Mexico and Utah except to maintain their boundaries against the encroachments of Texas, there would have been no serious trouble; no bleeding wound would have been opened. After the temporary excitement over the situation in California had subsided, it would have been clear to everybody that the South had played for a wider slave area, and had got Texas, while a sort of special providence had created a new free State on the Pacific Coast. To the sober judgment of the South there would have seemed to be no reason for deep and abiding enmity on this score. It seems to Dr. Macy unaccountable that it should not have been apparent to every statesman of the period that any positive action touching slavery in the Territories would but increase the irritation and tend to sectional division. Upon a policy of resistance to change for the sake of the Union the conservative Union-loving Southern Whigs might have held their ground as an effective fighting party. All this vantage ground was lost by Clay's bill for the organization of a Territorial government for Utah and New Mexico which removed the legal restrictions against the introduction of slavery.

III.

Part of the territory opened to slavery by the compromise act was north of the old Missouri Compromise line. There was from the first confusion in the minds of many as to whether the Missouri Compromise did or did not apply to the territory acquired from Mexico. The pro-slavery faction was especially outraged because California was being made into a free State notwithstanding a part of its territory was south of the Missouri Compromise line. Now since by act of Congress in 1850 slavery was made legally possible in part of the territory north of that line, the question was definitely raised whether the old compromise had not been repealed. If it were true that the old law had been abrogated, then slave property had legal access not only to Utah but to Kansas and Nebraska as well. For immediate practical purposes it made little difference whether or not slave holders could carry their property into Utah; it was, however, of immense practical import whether or not slaves could be taken into the territory on the western border of Missouri. Thus does Dr. Macy make it plain that Clay's prescription for closing a bleeding wound in the body politic did in fact inaugurate a conflict for the possession of Kansas which did not cease until the republic was already in the throes of civil war. The logical course of events was the following: First, in the mind of a few political leaders in the South the idea arose that the act of 1850 had repealed the Missouri Compromise; then in 1854 an explicit act of repeal, the so-called Nebraska bill, was passed; later in 1857 a decision was announced in the Supreme Court to the effect that the law embodying the Missouri Compromise had been from the first unconstitutional and that the slave holder had always had under the Constitution a right of access to all the territory of the United States, which right could not be taken from him by act of Congress. Our author concedes that the Whig leaders may be excused for not foreseeing all the direct and indirect consequences that were to flow from the reopening of the slavery question in the Territories. He thinks, however, that they are not to be excused for not foreseeing that the act would tend immediately and directly to aggravate the conflict which it professed to allay.

It is not disputed that there was much genuine bad feeling among the leaders of the South on account of the war with Mexico. That contest had been entered upon for the purpose of getting an increased area for slavery, but the disappointing result had been the acquisition of a large territory into which it would be practically impossible to carry slavery. To regard this feeling of disappointment as a dangerous wound was Henry Clay's mistake. The policy of the slaveholders with regard to Texas and Mexico had not had the expected outcome, but it was impossible to attach any serious blame to any party or any person apart from themselves. They felt that their peculiar institution was insecure, yet they could not point out anything external to their own section which was calculated to increase the insecurity. It is true that the abolition propaganda had been carried on in the North for some twenty years, yet it still commanded little respect and secured but little support. It is not at all likely that there would have been any serious effort to disrupt the Union in 1850 if the Compromise had not been enacted. Had such an effort been made, the conditions were ideal for bringing it to naught and demonstrating the strength of the Union. The disruptionists would have been met and vanquished by men of their own section. It would have been impossible at that time to unite the people of any one section in a secession movement. The frustration of an attempt at secession in 1850 would probably have rendered any later attempt futile. The time was favorable for meeting the disunion sentiment with firmness and courage. On the other hand, the system of petty annoyances inaugurated by the Whig compromise gave to the disunionists of the South just what was needed to enable them to present ten years later a solid front in defence of the alleged rights of their section.

What Dr. Macy undertakes to prove is that the political situation in 1850 furnished the Whig party just what it had long needed. It had suffered for want of a clearly defined party issue in which large numbers of the people were deeply interested. In this respect the party had been peculiarly unfortunate. The party name had been identified with no issue of enduring popular interest. In 1832 the National Republicans engaged in a campaign in which they advocated the rechartering of a national bank as a chief issue. Defeat ensued, and the party never again made the bank issue conspicuous in campaign politics. In 1836 the Whig party made William Henry Harrison, a former Democrat, its candidate, and presented no special issue apart from opposition to Jackson and the Van Buren Democracy. In 1840, when the whole country went wild over the triumphant campaign of the Whig party, no political issue was presented save criticism of the Van Buren administration. The party was unfortunate in the death of its President, and in the accession of a Vice-President who was not in harmony with the party leaders. At last, under the leadership of Clay in 1844, a definite issue was presented in which the people were greatly interested. Opposition to the extension of slave territory was the party platform. The Whigs were defeated, and slave territory was extended; but, as one of the unforeseen and incidental results of the Mexican War, the free territory of the nation was even more extended. A vital issue of great popular interest was thus in a manner thrust upon the party, and to gain the full advantage of the exceptionally favorable conditions nothing was required of it but to fulfil its traditional rôle of conservatism and moderation. It should have been assumed that, since the party had opposed the war through its opposition to the extension of slavery, it would take no positive step to introduce slavery into the free territory acquired from Mexico. This was all that was demanded to enable the Whig party to draw to itself the greater part of the anti-slavery forces North and South. The Whigs ought to have confronted the Democrats on that issue. It was a Democratic administration which had added free as well as slave territory to the country. The Whigs could have held the Democrats to the political consequences of their own acts.

IV.

Dr. Macy shows that there was another issue of even more widespread popular interest than the extension of slavery, and that was the preservation of the Union. He has no doubt that the Whig party could have saved the Union without a civil war. There may have been other agencies whereby the same result might have been attained, but this, he thinks, is the one most easily demonstrated and understood. The Secessionists early reached the conclusion that the Union could not be divided except by the formation of political parties upon sectional lines. Washington had foreseen this special form of danger to the Union. President Taylor in his inaugural address had embodied a solemn warning on the subject. The national Democratic party had adopted in 1840 an elaborate platform in which was set forth the importance of the liberty of the individual and the dangers attendant upon centralized government. The Democrats assumed for themselves the guardianship of the rights of our States under the Constitution. This platform, with only slight variations, was repeated in '44 and again in '48. It was of great advantage to the Democrats to have prepared this form of words which needed no change from decade to decade. The words announce good Democratic doctrine to-day. All authentic Democrats still believe in guarding the constitutional rights of the States. The Whig party might have replied to this Democratic declaration of faith with telling effect, conceding the proper rights of States, but calling attention to the danger that would threaten the Union from an undue emphasis of those rights. The supreme importance of upholding the integrity of the Union should have been strongly emphasized. Thus the Whig party as a party would have appeared in the light of savior and guardian of the Union. Nullifiers and disunionists would have found no place in its ranks. They would have been naturally attracted to the party of States rights. Such an issue clearly defined would have given the Whigs an immense advantage in the South as well as in the North.

Divided upon such fundamental political principles the two parties would quickly have passed beyond the realm of mere sentiment and would have formulated divergent programmes of conduct. Unlimited areas of rich land were to be occupied. The party of the Union would have favored a liberal policy in the opening up of the lands to settlement by freemen, and their opponents would have found it exceedingly difficult to resist them. There, too, was the old issue of internal improvements. The time was ripe for such an issue to strike the popular fancy. The era for the creation of a railway and a telegraph system had fully come. The railway, considered as a part of the national highway system, could have been powerfully commended as a Federal institution. Then, again, the shipping interests of the United States were acquiring large proportions. The improvement of rivers and harbors by the General Government was thus becoming a recognized necessity. The popular side of this issue belonged of right to the Whigs, as the party committed to the safeguarding of the interests of the Union. Finally, there was the conflict between protection and free trade. The tariff of 1846, enacted by the Democrats and moderately protective, was in working order. It would have been natural for the Whigs, from their traditional position, to give expression to a sentiment favorable to a modification of this law in the direction of accentuating its protective features; while the Democracy would naturally have been inclined to make effective a feeling favoring further advances toward free trade. As to the United States Bank, the Whigs were under no necessity of reviving that issue until such time as should be developed a sense of failure on the part of the separate State banking systems. Then it would have been in order for the old party to offer relief at the hands of the Federal Government. Clearly, had the party been ably led, there were issues at hand in abundance, well fitted to furnish material for an enduring platform involving policies of great popular interest such as would speedily place the party in an invulnerable position. All of these issues were strictly consistent with dominant Whig tendencies.

What, then, inquires Dr. Macy, would have become of the institution of slavery? Slavery, he answers, would have gone, just as the Secessionists of the day said it was going. They said that, if it were confined to its present limits, it would die. The Whig party, as a party of law and order, would have taken more and more effective measures against murdering men for publishing anti-slavery papers. The party would have opposed the practice of burning in the public streets anti-slavery literature unlawfully taken from the United States mails. The hearts of the opponents of slavery would consequently have warmed to the Whigs. Nearly all the abolitionists would have become known as regular voters of the Whig ticket at popular elections.

It is to be noted that the policy here outlined for the Whigs in 1850 would have left the party entirely non-committal on the subject of slavery within the States. Many Southern Whigs were ardent believers in slavery, but, for the most part, they would have remained in the party. As Whig statesmen they would have been confronted by Democrats bent upon disrupting the union for the sake of slavery. In the resultant trial of strength, the pro-slavery Whig leader would have found himself supported by the abolitionists. Dr. Macy reminds us that no human organization has ever developed such unlimited willingness to forgive sins under certain conditions as a living and active political party. An earnest party leader is sure in time to forgive any man or any class of men who, through evil report and good report, votes the regular party ticket. The pro-slavery Whig leader would have begun to forgive the faithful anti-slavery voter. He would have dropped a word now and then to show his forgiving spirit. He would also desire himself to gain forgiveness at the hands of his party friends, and would have made his conduct as inoffensive as he could. The Whig abolitionist, on the other hand, would, under these circumstances, have become less fanatical and more rational. He would have become likewise more influential. Such was the spirit of the age that it would have been impossible for any political party to place itself in effective opposition to the excessive demands and policies of the extreme pro-slavery party without rapidly becoming imbued with anti-slavery sentiments. The Free Soil party, and later the Republican party, disavowed any intention of interfering with slavery in the States. This would, of course, have been the position of the Whig party. The Whig party in the South, however, would have become the nucleus for the organization of anti-slavery forces within the Southern States which would, in time, have dealt effectually with the subject. No excuse would have been left for the union of all classes of whites in the South under the plea of resistance to foreign aggression. Under the mollifying, unifying influences of a great national party organization, Northern abolitionists and Southern abolitionists would have come to understand each other. The race problem would have received due recognition, and the practical control of policies would have been kept out of the hands of fanatics and extremists.

Fielding.

It is a new and enlarged edition of a book originally published in 1883, which Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co. have given us in a memoir of *Henry Fielding* by AUSTIN DOBSON. Of this work, when it was originally published, James Russell Lowell said that the author had done perhaps "as true a service as one man of letters ever did to another by reducing what little is known of the life of Fielding from chaos to coherence by ridding it of fable, by correcting and coördinating dates, by cross-examining tradition till it stammeringly confessed that it had no visible means of subsistence, and has thus enabled us to get some authentic glimpse of the man as he really was." Mr. Lowell went on to say that Mr. Dobson had "rescued the body of Fielding from beneath the swinish hoofs which were trampling it, as once they trampled the Knight of La Mancha, whom Fielding so heartily admired." The present edition is supplemented with a postscript and four appendices. Moreover, the author has gone through the book verifying its assertions anew and adding either in the text or as footnotes such fragments of fresh information as have come to his knowledge since the volume was first prepared. There is no doubt that he now offers us accurately and compactly the bulk of all that we are ever likely to learn concerning the man whom Scott called the father of the English novel.

I.

It is certain that Henry Fielding came of an ancient family, but the verifiable facts scarcely justify Gibbons's famous appreciation, which, however, is worth quoting: "Our immortal Fielding was of a younger branch of the Earls of Denbigh, who draw their origin from the Counts of Hapsburgh, the lineal descendants of Ethico in the seventh century, Duke of Alsace. Far different have been the fortunes of the English and German divisions of the family of Hapsburgh. The former, the knights and sheriffs of Leicestershire, have slowly risen to the dignity of a peerage; the latter, the Emperors of Germany and Kings of Spain, have threatened the liberties of the Old and invaded the treasures of the New World. The successors of Charles V. may disdain their humble brethren of England; but the romance of 'Tom Jones,' that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the Palace of the Escurial and the Imperial Eagle of the House of Austria." The novel has already outlived the Escurial, a large part of that palace having been burned in our own day, but modern genealogists are by no means satisfied as to the relations of the Denbighs and Hapsburghs. It is undisputed, however, that there was a Sir William Feilding (so spelled) killed at Tewkesbury and a Sir Everard, who had commanded at Stoke. Another Sir William, a stanch Royalist, was created Earl of Denbigh and died in fighting King Charles's battles. Of his two sons, the elder, Basil, who succeeded to the title, was a Parliamentarian and served at Edgehill under Essex. George, his second son, was raised to the peerage of Ireland as Viscount Callam, with succession to the earldom of Desmond. From this, the younger branch of the Denbigh family, Henry Fielding directly descended. The Earl of Desmond's fifth son, John, entered the Church, becoming Canon of Salisbury and Chaplain to William III. He had three sons and three daughters. Edmond, the third son, was a soldier who fought with distinction under Marlborough. When about the age of 30 he married a daughter of Sir Henry Gould of Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury in Somerset, and one of the Judges of the King's Bench. These last were the parents of the novelist, who was born at Sharpham Park on the 22d of April, 1707. One of Dr. John Fielding's nieces married the first Duke of Kingston, and became the mother of Lady Mary Pierrepont, afterward Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was thus Henry Fielding's second cousin. Having been born, however, in 1689, she was some eighteen years his senior.

On the death of Sir Henry Gould in 1710 the Fieldings seem to have removed to a small house at East Stour in Dorsetshire, a property which may have been purchased with Mrs. Fielding's money, for she had inherited from her father £3,000. At East Stour the Fieldings resided until April, 1718, when Mrs. Fielding died, leaving her eldest son—there was another son and three girls—a boy of not quite 11 years of age. Henry's education up to this time had been confided to a certain Mr. Oliver, who, according to the best authority, was the incumbent or the curate of Motcombe, a neighboring village. One of Fielding's biographers asserts that Parson Trulliber in "Joseph Andrews," is a "very humorous and striking portrait" of this clergyman. Just when Fielding was transferred to Eton is not known, nor have any particulars of his stay at that school come down to us. There is no reason, however, to doubt the statement that "when he left the place he was said to be uncommonly versed in the Greek authors, and an early master in the Latin classics." We may take for granted that he took a vigorous part in the sports and pastimes of the day. Among his schoolfellows were some who subsequently attained to high dignities in the State, and still remained his friends. Foremost of these was George Lyttleton, later the statesman and orator; another was the future Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, a third was Thomas Winnington, whom, in after years, Fielding defended when Tory scribblers assailed his memory. Of those who must be regarded as contemporaries merely were William Pitt, afterward Earl of Chatham; Henry Fox, Lord Holland, and Charles Pratt, Earl Camden. When Fielding left school it is impossible to say, but he was probably 17 or 18 years of age, for Mr. Dobson is convinced that his earliest recorded love affair must be referred to this stage of his career. At Lyme Regis there resided a young lady who in addition to great personal charms had the advantage of being the only daughter and heiress of one Solomon Andrew, deceased. In a chance visit to Lyme, where she was living in maiden meditation with one of her guardians, Mr. Andrew Tucker, young Fielding seems to have become desperately enamoured of her, and to have fluttered sadly the Dorset dovecots by his pertinacious and undesirable attentions. At one time he appears to have meditated the abduction of his "flame," for an entry in the town archives declared that Andrew Tucker, Esq., went in fear of his life, "owing to the behavior of Henry Fielding and his attendant, or man." Miss Andrew was prudently transferred to the care of another guardian, Mr. Rhodes of Modbury, to whose son, a young gentleman of Oxford, she was promptly married. There was a tradition in the Tucker family that Miss Andrew was the original of Miss Sophia Western, but the author of "Tom Jones" says distinctly in that novel that the model of that captivating heroine was his first wife. This matter Mr. Dobson deems sufficiently interesting to make it the subject of discussion in an appendix.

From Eton young Fielding went to the Dutch university of Leyden, then still retaining much of its pristine distinction, and there he is reported have studied the civilians "with a remarkable application for about two years." At the expiration of this time, remittances from home failing, he was obliged to forego the lectures of the learned Vitrirarius, then professor of civil law at Leyden, and return to London, which he did at the beginning of 1728. Nominally, his father, who was now a General, made him an allowance of £200 a year, but this, as Fielding himself explains, "anybody might pay that would." Consequently, he had to live by his wits, and his opportunities, if not his inclinations, directed him to dramatic writing. At this date he was in the prime of youth. From the portrait by Hogarth, representing him at a time when he was broken in health, it is difficult to reconstruct his likeness at 20. Mr. Dobson thinks, however, that we may fairly assume the "high-arched Roman nose" with which his enemies reproached him, the dark eyes, the prominent chin and the humorous expression; and it is clear that he must have been tall and vigorous, for he was over 6 feet when he died, and had been remarkably strong and active. Add to this that he inherited a splendid constitution, with an unlimited capacity for enjoyment, and we have a fair idea of Henry Fielding at that moment of his career when with passions "tremblingly alive all o'er," he stood upon the threshold of young manhood.

II.

The first of Fielding's dramatic essays that was produced upon the stage was a five-act comedy entitled *Love in Several Masks*, which was played at Drury Lane in February, 1728. The dialogue, which is obviously framed on that of Congreve and Wycherley, is ready and witty, but the characters have the defect recognized by Lord Beaconsfield when he spoke of his own earliest efforts. "Books written by boys," he says, "which pretend to give a picture of manners and to deal in knowledge of human nature, must necessarily be founded on affectation." The success of the piece was probably due to the acting of Mistress Anne Oldfield, who took the part of Lady Matchless a character closely related to the Lady Townlys and Lady Betty Modishes in which she won her triumphs. She seems, indeed, to have been unusually interested in this comedy, for she consented to play it notwithstanding a "slight indisposition" contracted "by her violent fatigue in the part of Lady Townl[y]," and she assisted the author with her corrections and advice—perhaps with her influence as an actress. Fielding's distinguished kinswoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, also read the manuscript. Mr. Dobson says that if certain scenes in it be considered, the protestation in the prologue,

> Naught shall offend the Fair One's ears to-day,
> Which they might blush to hear, or blush to say,

has an air of insincerity, although, contrasted with some of the writer's later productions, *Love in Several Masks* is relatively pure. He might honestly think, however, that the work which had received the approval of a stage queen and a lady of quality should fairly be regarded as morally blameless, and it would be superfluous to bring forward any bulk of evidence to prove that the morality of 1728 differed from the morality of to-day.

During the next seven years Fielding continued to produce comedies and farces with great rapidity, both under his own name and under the pseudonym of Scriblerus Secundus. Most of these show signs of haste, and some are recklessly immodest. It is, however, to be noted that the writer gradually renounced the "wit-traps" of Wycherley and Congreve, and dealt with the direct censure of contemporary folly. It was in this field, if we overlook his translations and adaptations from the French, that his most brilliant theatrical successes were won. One of these was the farce called *An Old Man Taught Wisdom*, a title subsequently changed to the *Virgin Unmasked*. This piece was obviously written to display the talents of Mrs. Clive, who played in it her favorite character of a hoyden, and after interviewing a number of suitors chosen by her father finally ran away with Thomas, the footman. It cannot be claimed for Fielding that as a dramatist he attained eminence. Mr. Dobson holds indeed that his plays do not deserve the sweeping condemnation with which Macaulay once spoke of them in the House of Commons, but he admits that they are not likely to attract any readers but those for whom even the inferior efforts of a great genius possess a morbid fascination. Some of them serve in a measure to illustrate his career; others contain hints and situations which he afterward worked into his novels; but the only ones that possess real stage qualities are those which he borrowed from Regnard and Molière.

The exact date of Fielding's marriage is not known. It is generally assumed to have taken place in the beginning of 1735, but, according to the author of this memoir, it may well have been earlier. Concerning the lady the particulars are more precise. She was a Miss Charlotte Cradock, one of three sisters living upon their own means at Salisbury. If the picture of Sophia Western given in *Tom Jones* does, as the novelist asserts, truthfully represent the first Mrs. Fielding, she must have been a most charming brunette. Something of the stereotyped characteristics of a novelist's heroine obviously enters into the description; but the luxuriant black hair, which, cut "to comply with the modern fashion," "curled so gracefully in her neck;" the lustrous eyes the dimple in the right cheek, the chin rather full and small, and the complexion having "more of the lily than of the rose," but flushing with exercise or modesty, are doubtless accurately set down. In speaking of the nose as "exactly regular," Fielding appears to have deviated slightly from the truth; for Lady Louisa Stuart has recalled that, in this respect, Miss Cradock's appearance had "suffered a little" from an accident mentioned in *Amelia* to wit, the overturning of a chaise. Whether she also possessed the mental qualities and accomplishments which fell to the lot of Sophia Western we have no means of determining; but Lady Louisa Stuart is authority for the assertion that she was as amiable as she was handsome.

According to Murphy, one of his biographers, Fielding, after his marriage, retired to a small place in the country "with his wife, on whom he doted, with a resolution to bid adieu to all the follies and intemperances to which he had addicted himself in the career of a town life. Unfortunately, a kind of family pride here gained an ascendant over him, and he began immediately to vie in splendor with the neighboring country squires. With an estate not much above £200 a year and his wife's fortune, which did not exceed £1,500, he encumbered himself with a large retinue of servants, all clad in costly yellow livery. His chief pleasure consisted in society and convivial mirth; hospitality threw open his doors, and in less than three years entertainments, hounds and horses entirely devoured the little patrimony, which, had it been managed with economy, might have secured to him a state of independence for the rest of his life." Keightley, another biographer, contends that this well-known passage is a "mere tissue of error and inconsistency." If Fielding inherited anything from his mother it must have been when she died in 1718, and not a penny of it could have been left seventeen years later. On the other hand, the account given by Booth in *Amelia* of the opposition and ridicule which he, "a poor renter," encountered when he enlarged his farm and set up his coach has a distinctly personal accent. That he was lavish and lived beyond his means is quite in accordance with his character. The man who subsequently as a Bow Street magistrate kept open house on a pittance was not likely to be less profuse as a country gentleman with £1,500 in his pocket and newly married to a young and handsome wife. "He would have wanted money," said Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "if his hereditary lands had been as extensive as his imagination." Whether his footmen wore yellow or not, a few brief months found him again in town.

III.

In 1737, when the licensing act was passed, Fielding's career as a dramatic author was practically closed, although the *Wedding Day* was produced in 1743, and the posthumous piece entitled *The Good-Natured Man* was brought out by David Garrick in 1779. He now began to study law, supporting himself the while by writing for the newspapers, a kind of work which he did not entirely relinquish after 1740, when he was called to the Bar by the benchers of the Middle Temple. Toward the close of 1741 he was engaged upon a work which will long remain an English classic. We refer to *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, which was published in February, 1742. This book, which was begun as a satire upon Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, gradually developed into a comic prose epic, intended, as the author himself explains, to describe not men, but manners, not an individual, but a species, although he admits that his characters are taken from life. It was, of course, in this story that the modern conception of the realistic novel took form. If Parson Adams is not the real hero of the book, he is undoubtedly the character whose fortunes the reader follows with the closest interest. He is always the same delightful mixture of benevolence and simplicity, of pedantry and credulity and ignorance of the world. He is compact of the oddest contradictions and most diverting eccentricities. He is perfectly familiar with the Pillars of Hercules, but he has never even heard of the Levant. He travels to London to sell a collection of sermons which he has forgotten to carry with him, and in a moment of excitement he tosses into the fire the copy of Æschylus which it has cost him years to transcribe. He gives irreproachable advice to Joseph Andrews on fortitude and resignation; but he is overwhelmed with grief when his child is reported to be drowned. When he speaks upon faith and works, on marriage, on school discipline, he is weighty and sensible; but he falls an easy victim to the plausible professions of every rogue he meets. Upon its title page this novel is declared to be "written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes," and there is no doubt that, in addition to being subjected to an unreasonable amount of ill-usage, Parson Adams has affinities with Don Quixote.

The *Miscellanies*, which appeared in 1743, included the remarkable work entitled the *History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild, the Great*. Mr. Dobson does full justice to this narrative, which shows by innumerable subtle touches that the so-called greatness of a villain does not differ very materially from any other kind of greatness, which is equally independent of goodness. *Jonathan Wild the Great* is a model of sustained and sleepless irony; a prolonged satire upon the spurious eminence in which benevolence, honesty, charity and the like have no part. The author of this memoir does not hesitate to assign to it a place in Fielding's productions immediately after his three great novels, and the subordination of it to them is due rather to the nature of its subject than to the quality of its workmanship, which could hardly be excelled.

From 1743, when the *Miscellanies* appeared until the publication of *Tom Jones* in 1749 Fielding brought out no work of signal importance, and his personal history is exceedingly obscure. His health was shattered, and he had become a martyr to gout, which seriously interfered with the active practice of his profession. It is probable that his first wife died in the latter part of 1743, having been long in a declining state of health. For a time her husband was inconsolable. According to Murphy, "the fortitude of mind with which he met all the other calamities of life deserted him on this most trying occasion." His grief was so vehement "that his friends began to think him in danger of losing his reason." Nevertheless, some four years later, he married again, a fact which his biographers have been shy of disclosing, for the reason, presumably, that his second wife was his first wife's maid. On this point Lady Louisa Stuart observes:

> "The act was not so discreditable to his character as it may sound. The maid had few personal charms, but was an excellent creature, devotedly attached to her mistress and almost broken-hearted for her loss. In the first agonies of his own grief, which approached to frenzy, he found no relief but from weeping along with her; nor solace when a degree calmer but in talking to her of the angel they mutually regretted. This made her his habitual confidential associate, and in process of time he began to think he could not give his children a tenderer mother, or secure for himself a more faithful housekeeper and nurse. Her conduct as his wife justified his good opinion."

IV.

It was in December, 1748, that through Lyttleton's interest, Fielding was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Westminster, a commission to act for Middlesex being subsequently added. In February, 1749, *The History of Tom Jones a Foundling*, made its appearance in six volumes. For the price paid to the author by the publisher we are indebted to Horace Walpole, who says: "Millar, the bookseller, has done very generously by Fielding; finding *Tom Jones*, for which he had given him £600, sells so greatly, he has since given him another hundred." In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding's work had been mainly experimental. He had set out with an intention which had unexpectedly developed into something else, to wit, the comic epic in prose. His first novel, therefore while it had the freshness and energy of a first attempt in a new direction had also the disadvantages of a mixed conception and an uncertain plan. No one had perceived these defects more plainly than the author, and in *Tom Jones* he set himself diligently to perfect his new-found method. The characters in this novel, he tells us, are based upon actual experience. He does not purpose, he says, to present its reader with "models of perfection"; he has never happened to meet with those "faultless monsters." He holds that mankind is constitutionally defective, and that a single bad act does not of necessity imply a bad nature. He has also observed without surprise that virtue in this world is not always "the certain road to happiness," nor "vice to misery." In short, having been admitted "behind the scenes of this great theatre of nature," he paints mankind as he has found them, extenuating nothing, nor setting down aught in malice, but reserving the full force of his satire and irony for affectation and hypocrisy. He is entirely conscious that what he is engaged upon is no ordinary enterprise, he is certain that his pages will outlive both "their own infirm author," and his enemies; and he appeals to fame to comfort and reassure him. "Come, bright love of fame," writes Fielding in the "invocation" which begins the thirteenth book, "inspire my glowing breast! Not thee I call, who over swelling tides of blood and tears dost bear the hero on to glory, while sighs of millions waft the spreading sails; but thee, fair, gentle maid, whom Mnesis, happy nymph, first on the banks of Hebrus did produce. Thee, whom Maeonia educated, whom Mantua charmed and who on that fair hill which overlooks the proud metropolis of Britain, sat with thy Milton, sweetly tuning the heroic lyre fill my ravished fancy with the hopes of charming ages yet to come. Foretell me that some tender maid whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee but to enjoy, nay, even to feed, on future praise. Comfort me by a solemn assurance that, when the little parlor in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse-furnished box, I shall be read with honor by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall never know nor see."

Tom Jones has been compared to *Don Quixote*, and they are alike in the sense that both works were the precursors of a new order of things. It is pointed out, however, by the author of this memoir that *Tom Jones* has the advantage of a greatly superior plan, and an interest more skilfully sustained. The incidents which in Cervantes simply succeed each other like the scenes in a panorama are in Fielding but parts of an organized and carefully arranged progression toward a foreseen conclusion. As the hero and the heroine cross and recross each other's track, there is scarcely an episode (with the exception of the Man of the Hill's tale) which does not aid in the moving forward of the story. Little details rise lightly and naturally to the surface of the narrative, not more noticeable at first than the most everyday occurrences, and a few pages farther on become of the greatest importance. Progress and animation alone, however, will not make a perfect plot, unless probability be superadded. Mr Dobson does not go so far as to say that in Fielding probability is disregarded, but he thinks that it is considerably strained. The naivest coincidences continually occur; people turn up in the nick of time at the exact spot required and develop the most needful, though casual, relations with the characters. Imperfections of this kind are pronounced more worthy of consideration than some of the minor negligences which criticism has amused itself by detecting in this famous book. It must also be acknowledged that, notwithstanding the superiority of this novel to *Joseph Andrews* as a work of art, there is no male character in *Tom Jones* which can compete with Parson Adams. As for Sophia Western, she is acclaimed as "a charming example, the first of her race, of an unsentimentalized, flesh-and-blood heroine; and time has abated no jot of her frank vitality or her healthy beauty. Her descendants in the modern novel are far more numerous than the family which she bore to the fortunate—the too fortunate—Mr. Jones."

V.

We have left ourselves no space in which to speak of Fielding's third novel, *Amelia*, which appeared in December, 1751, and for which the author received a thousand pounds. There are reasons why *Amelia* should have been often judged inferior to its predecessors. Fielding must have been far more at leisure when he composed his earlier works than he could possibly have been when filling the onerous office of a Bow Street magistrate. Then again, as Gustave Planche has pointed out, *Tom Jones* was the condensation and summary of its author's whole existence. It was the outcome of many years of passions and reflexions the ultimate and complete formula of the personal philosophy evolved from everything which the author had seen and felt. Such an experiment is not twice repeated in a lifetime; the soil which produced so rich a crop can but yield a poorer aftermath. Behind *Tom Jones* was the author's ebullient youth and manhood; behind *Amelia* but a section of his graver middle age. To the reader, indeed, it is obvious that the Fielding of *Amelia* has suddenly become a far older man than the Fielding of *Tom Jones*. The robust and irrepressible vitality, the full-veined delight in living, the energy of observation and strength of satire which characterized the one give place in the other to a calmer retrospection a more compassionate humanity, a gentler and more benignant criticism of life. At the same time, Mr. Dobson, for his part, will not for a moment admit that *Amelia* shows an intellectual falling-off. Upon the figure of Amelia herself the novelist has lavished all his pains, and there is no more touching portrait in the whole of fiction than this heroic and immortal one of feminine goodness and forbearance. That conception remains, and must remain forever, in the words of one of Fielding's successors a figure "wrought with love, nought modish in it, pure and noble lines of generous womanhood that fits all time." There are many women who forgive; but Amelia does more, she not only forgives, but she forgets. The passage in which she exhibits to her contrite husband the letter received long before from Miss Matthews is one of the noblest in literature, and if it had been recorded that Fielding had here slapped his fist upon the table and said "*That* is a stroke of genius!" it would scarcely have been a thing to be marvelled at.

A last point noted in connection with Amelia by the author of this memoir is one that is not always borne in mind by those who depict good women, after Hogarth's fashion, without a head. She is not by any means a simpleton, and it is misleading to describe her as a tender, fluttering little creature, who, because she can cook her husband's supper and caresses him with the obsolete name of Billy, must necessarily be contemptible. On the contrary, she has plenty of ability and good sense, with a fund of humor which enables her to enjoy slyly and even satirize gently the fine lady airs of Mrs. James. She is drawn, as we have said, from life, being, as well as Sophia Western, the portrait of Fielding's first wife. It may be well to close by reproducing the depreciatory sketch of Amelia, which is put in the mouth of Mrs. James and which involuntarily conveys the impression of a very handsome woman: "In the first place, her eyes are too large; and she hath a look with them that I don't know how to describe; but I know I don't like it. Then her eyebrows are too large; therefore, indeed, she doth all in her power to remedy this with her pincers; for if it was not for those her eyebrows would be preposterous * * * Then her nose, as well proportioned as it is, has a visible scar on one side * * * Her neck, likewise, is too protuberant for the genteel size, especially as she laces herself; for no woman, in my opinion, can be genteel who is not entirely flat before. And lastly, she is both too short and too tall * * * Well, you may laugh Mr James; I know what I mean, though I cannot well express it. I mean that she is too tall for a pretty woman and too short for a fine woman. * * * There is such a thing as a kind of insipid medium—a kind of something that is neither one thing nor another. I know not how to express it more clearly; but when I say such a one is a pretty woman, a pretty thing, a pretty creature, you know very well I mean a little woman; and when I say such a one is a very fine woman, a very fine person of a woman, to be sure I must mean a tall woman. Now a woman that is between both is certainly neither the one nor the other." It is the novel containing this description of which the envious Richardson declared that he could not get further than the first volume.

M. W. H.